



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
NANCY FLOREEN

MARCH 18, 2008

Chairman Conway, Vice Chair Proctor, and members of the appropriations committee

For the record, I am Nancy Floreen, At-Large Montgomery County Councilmember and Chair of the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee. I thank you for this opportunity to speak today in opposition to HB1471. The ICC is a seminal state project with an approved funding plan and shovels in the ground. We are past the point of debate.

The ICC project, an environmentally sound parkway offering a high quality east-west link between two smart growth areas, is a balanced solution to the impossible congestion that Montgomery, Prince George's, and many surrounding counties are all facing.

The single issue that unites residents in Montgomery County, regardless of age, race, or party affiliation, is frustration with traffic congestion. In the absence of an Intercounty Connector, local roads have, by default, been turned into regional highways, which is devastating communities, compromising traffic and pedestrian safety, and damaging the environment.

Our residents take the master plan process very seriously. For close to 50 years, Montgomery County's master plans, which are agreed to through a very public process, and the accompanying project approvals during all these decades, have been premised on the reality of this road. Now is not the time to destroy that planning.

Roads do not produce bad air quality; cars and bad driving habits do. This legislature has many tools at hand to address the problem – higher gasoline taxes, fee and tax penalties for large SUV's or other gas-guzzling vehicles, incentives to purchase hybrids or other fuel efficient vehicles, and encouragement for biodiesel research and use.

The ICC will take idling engines off the roads by providing a 10% reduction in average weekday traffic on more than 40 miles of main east-west roads and by reducing hours of congestion by 25% at 29 extremely congested intersections. And we will be getting 8 additional acres of parkland for every acre used for the highway. So let's get on with it.